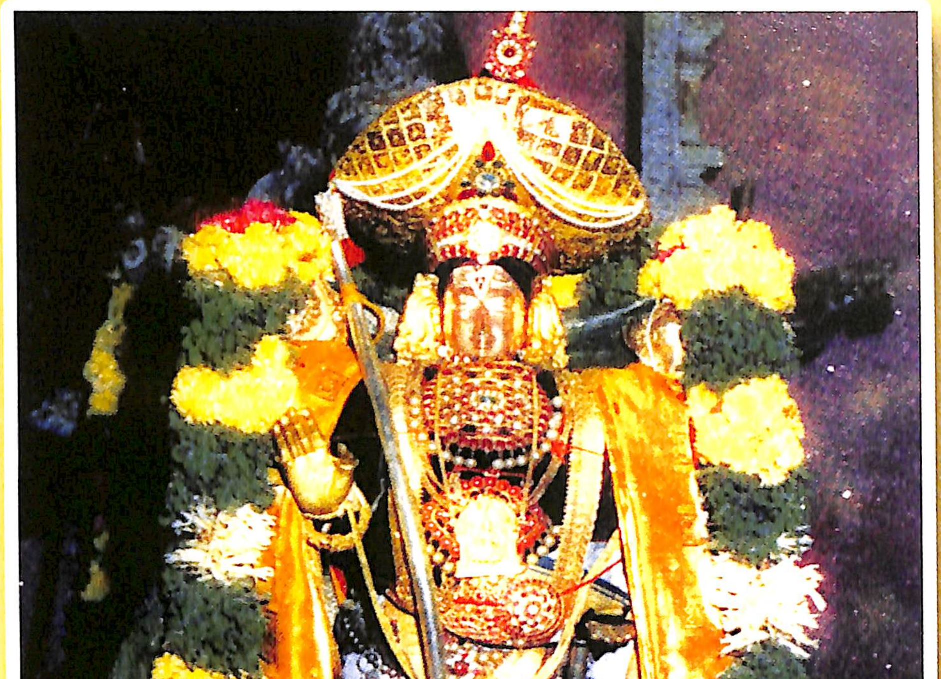
As a man thinks, so he becomes.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

SPLENDOUR

August 2007 | The Alpha Foundation | Rs. 20/US$4



Sri Tiruvann Purushottaman, Tirunangur

"Of the Splendid, I am the Splendour" — Gita X:36

SPLENDOUR

Sadhaka's Digest

August, 2007 The Alpha Foundation Vol.VII # 08

ADDRESS
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The Alpha Foundation, # 8, Dwarakapuri Colony
Panjagutta, Hyderabad 500 082, India.
Phones:23435353-58.

SUBSCRIPTION

	India (Rs.)	Overseas (US$) (by airmail)
One Year :	200	40
Three Years :	550	110
Five Years :	900	175

Subscriptions should be sent by cheque, demand draft or MO only, in favor of "The Alpha Foundation" payable at Hyderabad, India. (Outstation cheques should include Rs.40 towards bank charges.)

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Published on behalf of YMA Publications by the Alpha Foundation, # 8, Dwarakapuri Colony, Panjagutta, Hyderabad 500 082, Andhra Pradesh and printed by M/s.ICIT Software Center Private Limited, Press Division, # 1, Technocrat Industrial Estate, Balanagar Cross Roads, Hyderabad 500037, Andhra Pradesh. Editor: Vennela Nandury.

Sūkti Manjari

Wisdom through the Ages

"All of us are pilgrims on this earth. I have even heard it said that the earth itself is a pilgrim in the heavens."

Maxim Gorky

"Ask yourself constantly, "What is the right thing to do?"

Confucius

"In asking for miracles, we are not asking for something outside us to change, but for something inside us to change."

Marianne Williamson

"The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind."

Sri Aurobindo

"Through difficult experiences, life sometimes becomes more meaningful."

The Dalai Lama

"When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt."

Henry Kaiser

7th Year of Publication

"Tejas Tejaswinam Aham" — Gita X:36

SPLENDOUR

Sadhaka's Digest

ISSN-0972-5296

August, 2007 The Alpha Foundation Vol.VII # 08

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The September, 2007 issue will be available online by 8 pm (IST) on August 25, 2007; full access is free for paid subscribers only.

Chaahat seeya asok saun aagi su
dai prabhu mudrikaa sok nivaaro
ko nahin jaanat hai jag main kapi
sankatamochan naam tihaaro

O Hanuman, You saved Sita from ending her life by giving her Lord Rama's ring. Who in this world does not know, you are the supreme destroyer of all distress!

The Dawn

The Vedas

Look at how the dawn has set up her banner on the eastern horizon. She has adorned and anointed herself with sunlight. She is throwing lights of red and gold into the sky.

She is singing as she sets about her work. She has come from a distant place on a chariot drawn by tawny cows, who emit a soft light. She brings food day by day to those who act righteously, to those who are generous, and to priests who perform their rituals with care.

Like a dancing girl she decorates herself with bright ornaments. She uncovers herself, revealing breasts as swollen as those of a cow ready to be milked. From her breasts come light that fills the entire universe. She breaks out of the darkness, as cows break out of their pens.

Her brilliant flame becomes visible once more. She pushes forward, driving back the formless darkness of the night. She gazes out at all the creatures of the world, and sends her light straight into every eye. She awakens all that lives – and she gives words to every poet.

This divine being is born again and again each morning, always dressed in the same colors. She causes men and women to grow older, pulling them across their span of life. She is a cunning gambler whom no one can outwit.

She pushes aside her sister, the night, beyond the very edges of the sky. And she draws to herself her lover, the sun.

Improve Your Sanskrit Vocabulary

C Rama Devi

We come across a number of Sanskrit words in our daily life. More often than not, we might like to know the correct meaning of such words. Here is a small exercise for you to test your knowledge of such words. Select your answers, then turn to page 8 to find out your score.

1. **Udyotaḥ** – a) light b) employment c) cluster d) systematic e) impressed.
2. **Uddeśaḥ** – a) prayer b) live c) country d) liking e) opinion.
3. **Alam** – a) enough b) wave c) water d) ginger e) tasty.
4. **Alamkṛtiḥi** – a) dimension b) spending c) decoration d) a mansion e) none.
5. **Alpaśaḥ** – a) in a low degree b) sea c) in a high degree d) sky e) wind.
6. **Ikṣhuḥu** – a) fire b) Indra c) a king d) sugarcane e) none.
7. **Indhanam** – a) cane b) indicating c) increasing d) fuel e) entry.
8. **Ṛutuḥu** – a) season b) beans c) earth d) curse e) flower.
9. **Oudāryam** – a) curiosity b) generosity c) linking d) indicating e) respectful.
10. **Kaṇṭakita** – a) throne b) spoiled c) thorny d) blinded e) none.
11. **Katthanam** – a) boasting b) bulky c) money d) narrated e) none.
12. **Gatiḥi** – a) goal b) great c) motion d) governed e) none.
13. **Grandhaḥa** – a) begging b) befitting c) opened d) owned e) binding.
14. **Chibukam** – a) chin b) chapped c) late d) season e) cat.

15. **Jīvanakam** – a) quarrel b) food c) cause d) forest e) wood.

16. **Jnāpitha** – a) recommend b) installing c) indication d) grandfather e) none.

17. **Jhashaḥa** – a) fish b) crane c) brave d) rapid e) learned.

18. **Tarakā** – a) sky b) moon c) night d) moon light e) star.

19. **Tandavam** – a) beating b) singing c) running d) dance e) churṇing.

20. **Tātvika** – a) proud b) related to truth c) ego d) forget e) follow.

Answers

1.	a	6.	d	11.	a	16.	c
2.	e	7.	d	12.	c	17.	a
3.	a	8.	a	13.	e	18.	e
4.	c	9.	b	14.	a	19.	d
5.	a	10.	c	15.	b	20.	b

Explanations for Answers

1. **Udyotaḥ** – light.
2. **Uddeśaḥ** – opinion.
3. **Alam** – enough.
4. **Alamkṛtiḥi** – decoration .
5. **Alpaśaḥ** – in a low degree.
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17. **Jhashaḥa** – fish.
18. **Tarakā** – star.
19. **Tānḍavam** – dance.
20. **Tātvika** – related to truth.

Ratings of Your Score

09-11	:	Fair
12-15	:	Good
16 and above	:	Excellent

Cover Theme

Purandardas

The Father of Carnatic Music

Dr. G Ramesh Babu

Part I

Introduction

Purandardas (1484-1564 AD) is synony-mous with the Carnatic music. He is also known for his Dasa Sahityam through which he propagated Bhakti movement during 16th century. While Purandardas dedicated himself to Vishnu cult, Basaveswara confined to Siva cult. Both of them enriched Kannada Sahityam with their devotional songs.

Strictly speaking one should accept that the modern period of Carnatic music has begun with the saint-poet Purandardas and that is why he is popularly referred to as 'Karnataka

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Sangeetha Pitamaha' i.e., the Father of Carnatic music. He was the pioneer who blended the rich musical streams of Dravidian and Aryan styles into a single stream called Carnatic music. This synthesis of different cultures has not only enriched the tradition but also opened new vistas to the wonderland of melody. The Aryan system was more prevalent in princely courts, the Dravidian system was prevalent in the South Indian temples whereas the Carnatic system was prevalent among the common people and that has made Purandardas the darling of masses. No doubt, he was committed to Vishnu cult but never neglected the human values. His ideology of Bhakti and Seva (Devotion and Service) to the God and mankind is unparallel. He expressed crystal clear in a number of his songs that without loving the fellow-beings, animals and nature; worshipping the God, day and night, would merely be a wasteful exercise. He believed service was more beautiful than anything else in the nature. He also aptly said that the service should be heartful with all dedication and commitment. Thus, Purandardas seems to have been established a blend of devotion and service, probably, a novel way of social reformation.

There are six ways of traditions in offering prayer to the God Supreme. Soura Aradhakas worship the Sun and Ganapatheyas, the Lord Ganapathi. Similarly Sakteyas, a sect of people who worship Sakti, the Goddess Parvati and other sect Lord Kumaraswami

> Fate is nothing but the sum total of the results of your past actions.
>
> *Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati*

and thereby they are referred to as Kārtikeya Aradhakas. The left over Vishnu and Siva are the main traditions. Vishnu Aradhakas accept the supremacy of Lord Vishnu whereas Siva Aradhakas approve the supremacy of Lord Siva. By and large Adi Sankara belonged to the Siva cult, whereas Madhvacharya and Ramanujacharya belonged to the Vishnu cult. Here also Madhvacharya stood for Dwaitam (Dualism) and Ramanujacharya for Vishista Adwaitam (specific non-dualism). Adi Sankara was an absolute Adwaiti who had expressed the ideology of "Aham Brahmāsmi". It is an acknowledged fact that this 'Trio's ideologies are for intellectuals, and not for the masses. In order to disseminate these concepts among the masses, great persons like Purandardas and Basaveswara emerged into picture and plunged into action. Purandardas through his Dasa Sahityam propagated Vishnu cult by worshipping Viṭṭala or Vitobha or Panduranga of Pandaripur (a well-known religious and spiritual center of Vishnu cult). On the other side, Basaveswara popularized Siva cult through his ideology of Veera Saivam. Purandardas was followed by Kanakadas, Mohandas, Vijayadas and Jagannadhdas whereas Basaveswara was followed by Akka Mahadevi, Channa Basaveswara and Nijaguna Sivayogi. The thought of Ramanujacharya's school was propagated by a number of Nayanars and Alwars who

> Our senses through ignorance of reality, falsely tell us that what appears to be, is.
>
> *Plutarch*

praised Lord Vishnu as their ultimatum. Thus, Purandardas had an opportunity to participate in Bhakti movement only to have a crucial role in establishing the supremacy of Vittala or Vishnu. Curiously, he adopted Suladigas (songs) as medium of his expression to propagate devotion for Lord Vishnu and spiritual enlightenment out of it. Quite surprisingly and rightly, he incorporated human values, in the form of social reformation. At this point, Purandardas differed from all others. He was a saint-poet and also a social reformer. He preferred to be referred as the servant of Ranga Vittala (*Ranga Vitalana dasa*).

Biography

Any biography of Purandardas acceptable as factual and realistic in a modern time is almost impossible since definitive and incontestable evidences about him are lacking. However, from the Kamalapur Inscription of 1526, we could understand that Purandardas was also known as Purandara Vittala, who had three sons. Madhvapati was the name of one of his sons, and the names of others were not known. Even the name of his wife has also become a point of dispute. According to some, his wife's name is Srilakshmi Saraswati Bai and according to some others she is known as Kamala Bai.

Purandardas was earlier known as Srinivasa Nayaka. He was born in Purandargarh near Pune during 1484 AD. He was the only son of a very wealthy merchant Varadappa Nayaka who belonged to an orthodox Madhva Brahmin sect. Srinivasa

> India's strength is its cultural universalism and not cultural nationalism. India would be untrue to itself if it ever forgot that it was an open society.
>
> *Bhikhu Parekh*

Nayaka was also known as Krishnappa Nayaka and Seenappa Nayaka. He was an answer to his parents' intensely devoted prayers to the Lord Venkateswara ofTirupati. Some of the devotees of Puradardas alias Srinivasa Nayaka believe even today that he was none other than the incarnation of the well-known devotee of Lord Vishnu, Sri Narada Mahamuni. Whether we accept this version or not, Purandardas seems to be in no way inferior to Narada Maharshi.

Srinivasa Nayaka belonged to *Vashisṭa Gōtra* and followed *Yajus Sākha*. He inherited a banking business and trade in jewelry and diamonds from his father. He was a shrewd businessman and money-minded. He was well-educated and conversant with the religious life and tradition of his fore-fathers. His love for music was quite surprising. Whether he learned music from someone else or he was self Guru is a matter for conjecture.

Srinivasa Nayaka was married to Saraswati Bai who came from a highly cultured family. Her piety must have been a source of great comfort and help to Srinivasa Nayaka in life.

Srinivasa Nayaka became so rapt in his trade and within a short span of time, he amassed great wealth, to the neglect of all the virtues that should mark a person educated and well brought up. For him, everything was business and he had not regarded any human values. He used to go to the Vijayanagar capital many times to sell diamonds and other precious

> Inhale, and God approaches you. Hold the inhalation, and God remains with you. Exhale, and you approach God. Hold the exhalation, and surrender to God.
>
> *Krishnamacharya*

stones to the richest people there at Hampi. He had been acknowledged as one of the leading business persons of his time and referred to as "Navakōṭi Nārāyaṇa". Though he earned crores of rupees, he became a byword for miserliness. He became insensitive to human considerations. He never bothered about others and his only world was money alone. The increase in his fortunes resulted in concomitant increase in miserliness much to the dislike and dismay of his noble and saintly wife.

On an eventful day, Lord Vittala Himself came to the working place of Srinivasa Nayaka in the guise of a poor brahmin and begged him for alms for conducting Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony) of His son. But Srinivasa Nayaka did not listen the plea of that brahmin. Moreover in his customary style, he drove the brahmin away from his shop. Still the brahmin tried again and again for alms from Srinivasa Nayaka. Despite these repeated trials, Srinivasa Nayaka had not heeded to the request of the poor brahmin and remained highly stubborn. He was at the height of arrogance and refused point-blank.

Then Lord Vittala who was in the guise of a poor brahmin straight away went to Saraswati Bai, wife of the diamond merchant, Srinivasa Nayaka and narrated the entire episode that happened. Saraswati Bai felt very bad about her husband's miserliness and decided to help the poor brahmin. Without a second

> There is nothing softer and weaker than water, and yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things. For this reason there is no substitute for it.
>
> *Lao Tzu*

thought, she gave him away her valuable diamond studded nose ring. The brahmin took that diamond studded ornament and approached once again Srinivasa Nayaka. He requested the merchant to buy that nose ring by making an appropriate payment. Srinivasa Nayaka took that diamond ornament and examined it thoroughly. He immediately identified that the nose ring was of his wife's. He requested the brahmin to stay for sometime at his shop. He kept the nasal ring in his iron safe and went to his home and questioned his wife where was her nasal ring? She lied that she kept it in the safe. Srinivasa Nayaka commanded her to show the ring immediately. Bewildered at the turn of events, Saraswati Bai decided to end her life by taking poison. With the pretext of getting the nasal ring, she went into the store room and about to take the poison. But to the great joy and surprise of Saraswati Bai, there was a similar ornament in the container. She realized that it was the leela of Lord Viṭṭala. She took the ornament and showed it to her husband as if nothing happened. After seeing the ornament Srinivasa Nayaka was surprised and he immediately checked his iron safe and found the ornament kept by him was in tact. He was quite puzzled and searched for the brahmin. He could not find him. This incident evoked mixed reactions in him and ultimately he realized that the poor brahmin who approached him was none else than the Lord Viṭṭala Himself. With great anxiety he went to his wife and pleaded her to explain him honestly what happened exactly. Saraswati explained him everything and

Of all the rights of women, the greatest is to be a mother.

Lin Yutang

confirmed that the poor brahmin was Lord Viṭṭala Himself. Srinivasa Nayaka felt aback for a moment and started repenting for his misdeeds. He begged pardon of the Lord and went in search of that poor brahmin. He exhausted in searching but could not find the Lord who was in the guise of a poor brahmin. Srinivasa Nayaka became a thoroughly transformed person. This incident served as an eye opener for him who lost all the delight in the worldly pursuits. Instantly, he eschewed all of his inherited wealth and pleasures of the senses. He resolved life of plain living and high thinking. Thus, he renounced all his belongings to become a saint or Haridasa. Thus, just a simple incident had changed a "Navakōṭi Nārāyaṇa" to a "Vyragya Sikhamani". From that time onwards Srinivasa Nayaka was referred to as Purandardas.

Purandardas went to Hampi from Purandargarh in order to meet Vyasarayaru who was supposed to be the incarnation of Bhakta Prahlada. This Vyasarayaru was born as Raghavendra Swamy in his next birth. Purandardas met Vyasarayaru approximately during 1510-1520 AD. Purandardas became the disciple of Vyasarayaru. However, Purandardas had become the founder of Dasakutami whereas Vyasarayaru stood for Vyasakutami. Dasakutami started singing devotional songs in praise of Lord Vittala and Dasa literature was meant for common people. On the contrary, Vyasakutami was filled with Vedantic intellectuals and their literature was confined to high level scholars. In other words, Dasakutami followed

> A grateful man is really the rich man since he pays back all he owes.
>
> *Kabirdas*

Bhakti Margam (Path of devotion) and Vyasakutami followed Jnana Margam (path of wisdom).

The saint Purandardas settled at Hampi in a mantapam (a rocky structure) which was located on the banks of the river Tungabhadra nearby the temple complex of Virupaksha Swamy and Saptaswara mantapam. Even today Purandardas mantapam is attracting the hundreds of Carnatic music lovers paying rich tributes to the legendary personality of yesteryears.

Purandardas had chosen Malavagowla raga and evolved it as Maya Malavagowla by mixing the equivalent Bhairav raga. He started the classical Carnatic music system by this Maya Malavagowla raga and attracted the millions of music lovers and sadhakas. He created several phrases of notes called Sarali, Janta, Aarohana-stayi, Avarohana-stayi and Datu swaras. He simplified the Tala system and moulded it into Pancha-Trimsati Tala system. He even composed several Alankaras. He created Pillari Geethams in Malahari raga and improved the music system by adopting different notes. He was therefore, rightly referred to as Karnataka Sangeetha Pitamaha.

In his "Vāsudēvana Nāmāvalīya", Purandardas declared himself that he composed 4,75,000 keerthanas. About 800 of them are available now. As the original tunes were lost, people sing some of them in their own tunes. Annamayya, the Pitamaha of Telugu Sankeerthanas had

> Every good act is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good that he does in this world to his fellow human beings.
>
> *Prophet Muhammad*

composed 32,000 keethanas. About 12,000 of his keerthanas are presently available. Both of them were the legendary musicians and ardent devotees of Lord Vishnu. Another similarity is that both of them had the grace of Lord Venkateswara Swamy.

During 1564 AD, while Purandardas was taking his early morning bath in Tungabhadra and when he was deeply engrossed with the ecstatic devotional feelings, Lord Vishnu appeared before him and took him away to His abode, the Vyakuntam. It is true that Purandardas was not here physically today, but his spirit of practicing the strict ethical observances, service to humanity and love for music would remain forever.

Purandardas and his Literature

The Father of Carnatic Music, Purandardas and other Haridasas after him followed the path of intense devotion for Lord Vishnu or Vittala. Purandardas followed Bhakti margam to attain salvation. This mystic saint adopted the way of Hari Nama Smaranam by his Sankeerthanas. He was the pioneer of this Bhakti movement coupled with human service. As he had chosen Kannada as the medium of his expression, he became the darling of even masses. His excellent compositions are regarded as *Purandaropaniṣhath* which has opened new vistas to the school of different thought.

The compositions of Purandardas are of various types

> In the End, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.
>
> *Martin Luther King*

of keerthanas, suladis and upabhogas. All of them are simple and the language used is Kannada with a few Sanskrit words. The music adopted is easy for understanding and recitation. He produced innumerable compositions ranging from the most homely to the most philosophical spreading the message of love, sacrifice, service, simple living, truthfulness, discipline, values and then devotion. The spirit behind these compositions is to be respected and cherished for ever. At the hands of Purandardas, these compositions attained acme of perfection that served as models even to the giant composers like Tyagaraja. Unfortunately, the most significant corpus of these musical compositions of Purandardas was missing since there was no written record. Thus, his compositions and music were lost for posterity. However, the available sankeerthanas are enough to speak of the grit, gravity and merit of the musical compositions of Purandardas. Apart from being a great composer, Purandardas was also a Lakshnakara of highest caliber who systematized the teaching methodology of music. Thus, he had set certain musical standards for all times. This was reflected in his suladis, upabhogas, padas and padyas. The beauty of these structures and the sentiments behind them were remarkably striking and invariably speak of the heart of Purandardas and the power of music in making the Bhakti movement highly successful. Purandardas used the musical instruments like tambura, kombu, flute, gajje and cymbals.

The Lord prefers common-looking people. That is the reason He makes so many of them.

Abraham Lincoln

even prabandha. There was also a mention on tala, dandige and geeta vadya.

Purandardas made use of rȧgas which were *in vogue* during his time. He sang many songs in Ramakri, Gundakri, Maharanjani, Ahiri, Kambhoji, Gurjari, Gundakriya, Deshkshi, Sribhupali, Bhairavi, Vasanta, Kalyani, Paadi, Poorva Gowri, Saranga and Shankara-bharanam ragas. Dasas popularized Kalyani and Darbar ragas with Persian influence.

The suladi sapta talas were introduced, perfected and brought into practice by Purandardas. His scholarship in music was astounding. Even today, majority of the people would believe that this scholarship was due to the grace of Lord Vittala. Purandardas introduced Thodi raga to the system of music. He prescribed Maya Malavagowla scale as the basic scale for music in place of the old Kharaharipriya scale. He used seven talas, but favored champu and Jampe talas. He remained as a model in music composition especially in the patterns like raga delineation, structure, tempo and specific features that form the basic structure of a song. Purandardas stood as an authenticated body of musical composition. The Trinity – Tygaraja, Muttuswamy Dikshitar and Syama Sastri – scrupulously respected the tradition of Purandardas.

(To be continued in September, 2007 issue)

Daily Reflections for August 2007

Sri Ramana Maharshi

The readers are advised to read one thought a day and then deeply reflect on it. Think about it. Live that idea. Apply it in daily life.

August 1: Mind is consciousness, which has limitations. We are originally unlimited and perfect. Later on, we take on limitations and become the mind.

August 2: Meditation depends upon the strength of mind. It must be unceasing even when one is engaged in work. Particular time for it is meant for novices.

August 3: When one makes the mind stick to one thought, the mind becomes rock-steady and the energy is conserved.

August 4: The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts have their root in the I-thought. Whoever investigates the True "I" enjoys the stillness of bliss.

August 5: When the mind is left without anything to cling to, it becomes still.

August 6: The inquiry "Who am I" turns the mind introvert and makes it calm.

August 7: There is no mind to control if you realize the Self. The mind having vanished, the Self shines forth. In the realized man, the mind may be active or inactive, the Self remains for him.

August 8: Meditation helps concentration of the mind. Then the mind is free from thoughts and is in the meditated form.

August 9: Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts; distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness; by constant meditation it gains strength.

August 10: When we turn the mind inwards, God manifests as the inner consciousness.

August 11: See who is the doubter, who is the thinker. It is the ego. Hold it; the other thoughts will die away – the ego will be left pure. See the source from where the ego arises and abide in it. That is pure consciousness.

August 12: The "I" thought is said to be the sum total of all thoughts. The source of the "I" thought has to be enquired into.

August 13: The mind of one meditating on a single object becomes one-pointed. And one-pointedness of mind leads to abidance in the Self.

August 14: Real attainment is to be fully conscious, to be aware of surroundings and the people around, to move among them all, but not to merge consciousness in the environment. One should remain in inner independent awareness.

August 15: Once the current of awareness of the Self is set afoot, it becomes everlasting and continuous by intensification.

August 16: Realization is to get rid of the relusion that you have not realized.

August 17: Good thoughts keep off bad thoughts. They must themselves disappear before the state of realization.

August 18: Realization is our true nature. It is nothing new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal. Therefore, there is no need to be doubting whether we would gain or loss the Self.

August 19: A realized one sends out waves of spiritual influence in his aura, which draw many people towards him. Yet he may sit in a cave and maintain complete silence.

August 20: Turn the mind inward and cease thinking of yourself as the body; thereby you will come to know that the

Self is ever happy. Neither grief nor misery is experienced in this state.

August 21: When we see our Self, there is no world; and when we lose sight of the Self, we get ourselves bound in the world.

August 22: The Self is like a pearl. To find it you must dive deep down into silence, deeper and ever deeper until it is reached.

August 23: The Self is pure knowledge, pure delight where there is no duality.

August 24: The illuminated one who is happy in the peace of the Self, without thought of the past and the future, and is like a mere witness of the present, has his knots of bondage cut.

August 25: He alone who has realized the Self in the heart has known the Truth. Having transcended the dualities, he is never perplexed.

August 26: The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it for yourself, within yourself.

August 27: A self-realized man remains happy without being affected by false appearances, whereas the ignorant man is miserable.

August 28: Seek the source of the ego, abide there for ever in the source and find yourself in bliss.

August 29: That pure consciousness which is the reality, and which shines without a break, as "I AM" when the mind becomes calm, is the supreme bliss.

August 30: The enlightened one that has become one with the unchanging supreme consciousness, like a river that has become one with the ocean, takes birth no more in a body.

August 31: All actions, past, present and future, become extinct in the case of a liberated one, because his sense of being the doer is gone; it was lost along with the ego, who alone was the doer. S

Adi Sankara

Voice of Sankara

The one Absolute, called Brahman by the Vedas, transcends our faculties. Yet it comes within our grasp and comprehensive in any form, shape and characteristic that we choose to invest it with. So God is worshipped in any form which a devotee wishes to, and he is considered to be still within the Hindu fold.

Worship Govinda who is supreme bliss, real, knowledge, infinite, and eternal, who is free from Akasha (and other upadhis), who is the highest light, who was eager as a child to crawl in the cow-pen, who is really free from difficulties, but who appears to be in difficulties.

Seeing, like pictures, the people of the city consisting of men and young women of different forms clad in attractive dress and decked with ornaments of gold. Realizing that he is actually seeing them and mixing merrily with them.

Meeting of Janak and Dasaratha

The Ramayana

On Ayodhya's tower and turret now the golden morning woke,
Dasaratha girt by courtiers thus to wise Sumantra spoke:
"Bid the keepers of my treasure with their waggons lead the
way,
Ride in front with royal riches, gold and gems in bright array,
Bid my warriors skilled in duty lead the fourfold ranks of war,
Elephants and noble chargers, serried foot and battle-car,
Bid my faithful chariot-driver harness quick each car of state,
With the fleetest of my coursers, and upon my orders wait.
Vamadeva and Vasishtha versed in *Veda's* ancient lore,
Kasyapa and good Jabali sprung from holy saints of yore,
Markandeya in his glory, Katyayana in his pride,
Let each priest and proud preceptor with Kosala's monarch
ride,
Harness to my royal chariot strong and stately steeds of war,
For the envoys speed my journey and the way is long and
far."
With each priest and proud retainer Dasaratha led the way,
Glittering ranks of forces followed in their fourfold dread array,
Four days on the way they journeyed till they reached Videha's
land,
Janak with a courteous welcome came to greet the royal band.
Joyously Videha's monarch greeted every priest and peer,
Greeted ancient Dasaratha in his accents soft and clear:
"Hast thou come, my royal brother, on my house to yield thy
grace,

Hast thou made a peaceful journey, pride of Raghu's royal race?
Welcome! for Mithila's people seek my royal guest to greet,
Welcome! for thy sons of valor long their loving sire to meet,
Welcome to the priest Vasishtha versed in *Veda's* ancient lore,
Welcome every righteous *rishi* sprung from holy saints of yore!
And my evil fates are vanquished and my race is sanctified.
With the warlike race of Raghu thus in loving bonds allied,
Sacrifice and rites auspicious we ordain with rising sun,
Ere the evening's darkness closes, happy nuptials shall be done!"
Thus in kind and courteous accents Janak spake his purpose high,
And his royal love responding, Dasaratha made reply:
"Gift betokens giver's bounty, - so our ancient sages sing -
And thy righteous fame and virtue grace thy gift, Videha's king!
World-renowned is Janak's bounty, Heaven-inspired his holy grace,
And we take his boon and blessing as an honor to our race!"
Royal grace and kingly greeting marked the ancient monarch's word,
Janak with a grateful pleasure Dasaratha's answer heard,
And the Brahmans and preceptors joyously the midnight spent,
And in converse pure and pleasant and in sacred sweet content.
Righteous Rama, gallant Lakshman piously their father greet,
Duly make their deep obeisance, humbly touch his royal feet,
And the night is filled gladness for the king revered and old,
Honored by the saintly Janak, greeted by his children bold,
On Mithila's tower and turret stars their silent vigils keep,
When each sacred rite completed, Janak seeks his nightly sleep.

Love Yourself

Ramona Dougals

Relationships are how we relate to others. We have a relationship with everyone that we know and who are close to us. This is not reserved for our family or someone that we are involved with. Every interaction we have with another is the act of relating. If we have a problem relating to others, this effects our ability to have supportive relationships. We have to ask ourselves if our relationships are supportive and if they are not, then ask ourselves why they are not. Everyone wants the perfect romance or marriage, but not everyone looks at the mechanics of how to have one. If we fail to have supportive relationships in our life, how can we have the 'perfect love relationship'?

Let's look at what is a supportive relationship. The word support is very important.

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It means that our interaction supports another. This means more than supporting another in their decisions or actions, rather through the act of supporting, we honor and validate who the other person is. In turn, this validates who we are. Both are supported, no one loses, no ego's involved, and in so doing, we honor the relationship. This is what it means to have a supportive relationship. This is the desired goal. Now, how do we accomplish it?

There are several reasons why we may have problems relating to others. One primary reason is our behavioral patterns. These patterns are developed over a course of our lives. It starts when we are children, through to our adolescence, and by the time we are an adult, we have established our behavioral patterns for our relationships. These behavioral patterns either work or they don't. It is how we interact or respond in our relationships that determine whether these patterns work. In addition, we can have both positive and negative behavioral patterns. Which is reflected in our life? The positive or the negative?

What causes negative behavioral patterns? If we look at a person's life, we can readily see which is negative or positive behavior. But we may not easily see the cause of the negative. The cause usually resides in the past in which a trauma or an event occurred that effects how we behave in the future. If that

All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure.

Mark Twain

event occurs again, or if something happens currently to cause us to experience that trauma again, that is when we respond to it. Situations can act as triggers, which may cause us to react to the person that is involved in the situation. This causes a negative behavioral pattern. Until we can identify the problem, we are powerless to do anything about it.

Whatever the situation was to trigger a reactionary response, the cause must be discovered in order to heal the original fracture. (Or stop the behavioral pattern.) In Shamanism terms this is called a Soul Fracture. A fracture of the Self. Each self is part of the whole which comprises the soul.

Soul Fractures occur for a variety of reasons and may or may not relate to this current lifetime. Trauma's have occurred in past lifetimes that may or may not have been addressed. The Soul holds the body of these life experiences. Furthermore, the life process itself can be very painful for some. Past experiences that have dishonored, or invalidated who we are, cause us to close ourself off even more. These experiences build up over a matter of time and unless a clearing occurs, emotional or physical problems may develop. We can go through life accruing more and more "garbage". And we can bring this into our relationships. These are just a few reasons why we can have

> The moment you are aware that you are happy, you cease to be happy. You want to be consciously happy: the moment you are consciously happy, happiness is gone.
>
> *J Krishnamurti*

problems in our relationships. Using this context, we can see the long road to having supportive and loving relationships.

If a problem has been identified, what can we do about it? One can try to clear it themselves, or one can go to a Practitioner who is adept at doing clearings. Either avenue can work. If someone is able to clear it themselves, it is more beneficial for them in how they will address problems in the future. This is a long process and one that is very involved.

In order to clear, one must identify the original cause that created a behavioral pattern. Then, move through the experience of that situation, and experience the emotions that we have associated with it. Then, we must have closure or completion. (This is the doing part of it. We must do something about it.) This means completing it anyway that we are able. As long as, we feel that we have a sense of completion for the experience.

For example, if the experience has to do with a person or a loved one that has died, we may not have the ability to directly talk to this person. But we can still communicate whatever is necessary to say to that person. In this case, the communication will have to be enough.

So, after we have identified the cause, moved through the experience, experienced the emotions associated with it,

> Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.
>
> *Rabindranath Tagore*

received closure or completion, then we let it go. We must let it go in order for the experience to clear. When we let it go, we release it. This does not mean to forgive or forget, that is not what it is to release. The act of releasing is our readiness to heal. Only after the experience has cleared can healing occur.

The healing process is a time when we must be very loving to ourself. If we beat up ourself about the experience that had caused us harm or our past reaction to it, then we cannot heal. In being loving to ourself, we validate what we had experienced at that time and our emotions for it, Our emotions are always valid. So its important for us to do this self validation in order to heal.

Love is the energy that helps us to heal, whether we give this love to ourselves, or we receive it from another. When we look at having supportive, loving relationships in our life, why not start with ourself? Because that is where love comes from. Its not about what we can receive from love but what we can contribute or give to love.

This is what transforms our relationships and lives. We must love the self first. And we cannot do that until we have healed and become whole. Ⓢ

If you want success in life, if you want to influence others, if you want to progress well in the spiritual path, if you wish to have God-realization, you must possess an unblemished or spotless character.

Swami Sivananda

The Buddha

Way to Enlightenment

All that we are is the result of what we have thought. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.

Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful.

To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind. If a man can control his mind he can find the way to Enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him.

Unity of All Life

May the winds, the oceans, the herbs, and night and days, the mother earth, the father heaven, all vegetation, the sun, be all sweet to us.

Let us follow the path of goodness for all times, like the sun and the moon moving eternally in the sky.

Let us be charitable to one another. Let us not kill or be violent with one another.

Let us know and appreciate the points of view of others. and let us unite.

May the God who is friendly, benevolent, all-encompassing, measurer of everything, the sovereign, the lord of speech, may He shower His blessings on us.

Oh Lord, remove my indiscretion and arrogance, control my mind. Put.an end to the snare of endless desires. Broaden the sphere of compassion and help me to cross the ocean of existence.

Trinity and Unity

The Upanishads

The universe is a trinity: name, form, and action.

The source of all names is the word, for it is by the word that all names are spoken. The word is behind all names; and God is behind the word.

The source of all forms is the eye, for it is by the eye that all forms are seen. The eye is behind all forms; and God is behind the eye.

The source of all actions is the body, for it is by the body that all actions are performed. The body is behind all actions; and God is behind the body.

While the universe is a trinity, it is also a unity; this unity is the soul, the spirit of all life.

The immortal is veiled by the real. The soul, the spirit of life, is immortal. Name and form are real; and by them the soul is veiled.

Our Limits on Love

Hector Esponda

Love, the saints teach us, is the most complete and unshakeable force in life. It is love more than anything else that leads us to a balanced and happy life. But until love becomes our dominant quality, our mind and senses will continue to limit its free flow.

The limits of knowledge

Love is another name for the spirit of God, which is a limitless and all-pervading reality. Our awareness of this divine love is limited by the present dominance of our intellect. The intellect can only reason and quantify. It cannot grasp the eternal and immortal, which can

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be grasped only by the soul. We cannot imagine God, because the reality that is God is beyond the reach of the human mind and intellect. By thinking, we cannot obtain any experience of him, even though we may read hundreds of books or think thousands of thoughts.

It is necessary to accept with our understanding some of the limitations we face when discussing such a grand subject. Stanley White, in *Liberation of the Soul*, discusses the limitations of the mind in understanding God. He says: "Our mind, as science tells us, is a finite entity. This means it has limits. It can only do so much, and then it can do no more. For example, we can multiply figures in our mind without the assistance of paper and pencil, but we can do so only up to a certain point before we become frustrated. We can hear sounds only in specific frequency ranges, although the sound spectrum extends above and below our audible range. We cannot perceive the presence of x-rays, infra-red, or ultra-violet rays, but this does not mean that they do not exist. Rather, it shows that we are unable to verify their existence through the use of our senses.

"At this very moment, we are being bombarded by radio waves from our local broadcasting stations, but we cannot verify this existence until we 'tune-in' to their frequency length by means of a specially designed receiver: Few of us would be foolish enough to deny the existence of radio and

No matter who says what, you should accept it with a smile and do your own work.

Mother Teresa

television transmissions simply because we cannot hear them unaided through our senses. We have thus come across an important principle of life.... There are things which exist that cannot be perceived by the senses.

"...Great religious teachers have said that God is infinite. This means that He is without limitation of any kind. How does a finite entity (the mind) comprehend something infinite like God? It is obvious that we have run into a rather severe problem. How can the mind understand something which is greater than itself?

"...Try to remember as you read that it may not be possible to explain every single concept in detail as there are no words to convey experience which goes beyond the realm of mind and matter.....Since words are of the mind, they cannot convey a reality higher than that experienced by the mind. With this point firmly fixed in our awareness, let us now attempt to use words to the best of our ability in an attempt to feed the mind spiritual insights from which it can profit."

Only that knowledge which is utilized in trying to understand God and our true self is, in the final analysis, useful. All other knowledge, although it might be helpful for some aspects of life, is too superficial to help us contact our true self and to realize the power of the Creator within.

> Peace is something mental and spiritual. If there be peace in our (personal) life, it will affect the whole world.
>
> *Vinoba Bhave*

We can realize this force by experiencing it, not by reading or by thinking about it. In order to experience it, we need to reach the regions of pure consciousness inside ourselves. By the words 'spiritual life' we mean a life of communion with this force, not a life spent in merely thinking, reading or talking about it.

God is everywhere, in every particle of the creation. He is also present in every one of us, for are we not part of the creation? Typically, as human beings we direct our efforts to finding him outside ourselves. Typically, we never consider searching within. This is an important part of the teachings of the saints, for it gives us a clue as to our error, and where we must search to find him. The principle is simple: The Creator we seek is not to be found outside. The Creator must be realized within the human body.

Once we realize God's power within ourselves, we will break through our limited concepts and find that he is everywhere—there is nowhere in the creation that he is not. Saints tell us that it is not possible to see God in the creation, however, unless we have first experienced him within our own being.

The limits of rituals and ceremonies

Rather than reaching out to God through the ocean of love, we become wrapped up in rituals and traditions. All religions preach the same ethical and

> For those who follow the spiritual life there comes a time when we distinctly hear God's Voice.
>
> *Sri Chinmoy*

spiritual truths for humankind. Their principal teachings are that all people should observe good conduct, have faith in the Creator, love him and attain communion with him.

Instead of emphasizing these fundamental spiritual points, the present-day religions ask us to worship or venerate past mystics such as Christ, Moses, Muhammad, Buddha, Krishna, Lao Tzu, Guru Nanak and so forth. They do not tell us how these mystics attained spiritual eminence or how we can effectively meet them so as to learn from them. They stress the necessity of having faith in one religious scripture or another, but they do not give us details as to how we can have the same spiritual experiences described in them. They tell us that our aim is to attain communion with God but fail to provide us with the tools to do so. They promise salvation, but on faith, and only after death.

Rites and rituals have taken the place of the experience of God. We are content to go to churches, synagogues, mosques and temples on the prescribed holy days, thinking that by attending such services and by listening to a priest, rabbi, mullah or pundit recite our holy scriptures we will gain salvation. But that is only a delusion of the mind.

If our aim is to reunite ourselves with God, how can this be achieved through rituals and ceremonies? Liturgies, rituals, ceremonies and places of worship only limit and hinder our

> The resource from which God gives is boundless, measureless, unlimited, unending, abundant, almighty, and eternal.
>
> *Jack Hayford*

efforts to search within because they put external worship in its place. As the Bible explains, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21); or, as St. Paul puts it, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (2 Cor. 6:16). Most of us are familiar with these words from the Bible. But do we understand them, or take note? It would seem we do not. Actually, our temples, mosques and synagogues stand as statements of how we try to limit God to the physical. How can we limit the Unlimited? How can God, who is everywhere, be constrained by walls of brick and mortar or stone?

Saints point to the truth and speak of a simple path to the divine reality which is inside every person. This path, they say, is a natural way to self-discovery. It has been created by God and has been in existence for as long as human beings have lived. It is not man-made. It has nothing to do with rituals or ceremonies, nor does it end in moral conduct or good works. Saints say that God exists and that all religions try to establish communion with him. The path, or discipline, of communion with God is commonly called religion. 'Religion' comes from the Latin word 'religare' which means 'to bind' or 'to unite'. Its real purpose is hidden in the root of the word. Religion means 're-uniting with God'. We can reunite ourselves with God only if we find him within. The underlying spiritual path is the

> Belief is truth held in the mind; faith is a fire in the heart.
>
> *Joseph Fort Newton*

same for all. Anyone who remembers God and achieves inner communion may be called God's true devotee, irrespective of who he is.

God created human beings, and only later did they become Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Sikha, Muslims and so forth. There were no Sikhs five hundred years ago, no Muslims thirteen hundred years ago, no Christians two thousand years ago, no Buddhists two thousand five hundred years ago, and no Jews four thousand years ago. People are people, whether of East or West, and all are equal, as there is a soul in each of them which is a particle of the same Creator.

There is only one God, although in our limitation we call him by different names. For example, to quench his thirst, one person may ask for *water.* A person from a different country may ask for *agua* and another for *pani* but they are all asking for the same H_2O) regardless of the name they call it.

To realize God, one may belong to any religion. To attain communion with the Creator, it is not necessary to give up one's own traditional religion. All human beings can meet God within, regardless of their gender, social status or religion.

Saints tell us that though God is to be found inside the temple of the body, between the soul and God lies the curtain of egoism and this is why the soul cannot see God. Both live in the same temple, at the same time,

> We are all affecting the world every moment, whether we mean to or not. Our actions and states of mind matter, because we are so deeply interconnected with one another.
>
> *Ram Das*

but they do not see each other. No ritual or ceremony can change this fact. Only true spirituality, the practice of inner meditation, can lift the curtain.

The limits of our worship

The real church or temple of God is the human form. This is a simple truth, yet perhaps only one person in a million makes his or her actual search for God within. External worship, the saints say, is not only limited but useless. St. Paul says: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:22).

If someone were to throw a stone through the window of our church or temple, we might fly after him in a rage and punish him as a temple desecrator—yet God dwells in that very person. Daily we ravage the real temple of God, the human body, by all manner of thoughts, words and actions. We search for God throughout the physical universe, yet fail to recognize where he can be found—within each and every one of us. We foolishly believe that mystics and saints speak only figuratively when they tell us that the Creator is to be found within. We fail to grasp the literal meaning of their words.

We limit our worship of God when we ask him for things as if we were bargaining at a marketplace. Normally, the benefits we expect from him have to do with physical or material things like health, wealth or relationships. If we succeed in getting what we want, we only become more involved in the

> You are born therefore you must die, but don't die while living, live after you are read.
>
> *Swami Chinmayananda*

creation. This type of worship is more like a commercial transaction in which we try to bribe God. If he gives us what we want, we will give so much in charity or we will do such and such a thing. In reality all these limited forms of worship are nothing but 'spiritual materialism'. As far as true spirituality is concerned, they are useless.

Another form of spiritual materialism is when we mistake doing humane works with spirituality. True spiritual teachers are not concerned with changing this world. They know that this world is a learning stage for the soul. Just as there are stages from elementary school to university, so also there are intermediary learning stages in the journey of the soul. This world is one of these stages.

The souls that incarnate in this world have to learn from the subjects that are offered in this school called 'earth'. Human beings throughout time will be exposed to the same subjects. These subjects present themselves as pairs of opposites. We will always have to deal with feelings of love and hatred, lust and self-control, greed and contentment, anger and forgiveness, sickness and health, life and death, and so on. This duality is the nature of the world. As long as there are days, there will be nights. As long as there is wealth, there will be poverty. As long as there is war, there will be peace. Our aim should be to graduate from

> Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrows. It only saps today of its strength.
>
> *A J Cronin*

this school by raising ourselves above the pairs of opposites. It is then that we will arrive at our real spiritual home.

If we do not know how to swim, how can we save somebody who is drowning? Would it be selfish to first concentrate our efforts on learning how to swim? Only then can we help those who are drowning. It is very easy to criticize the state of the world, but if each one of us becomes a better person, we will make a far better contribution to improving it than engaging in endless discussions on what everyone else is doing wrong.

Building hospitals, churches, hospices and schools, and doing other types of charitable work—like working with the sick, the dying and the needy—are all worthy humanitarian endeavors and do indeed give us a sense of fulfillment. The trouble is that humanitarianism is mistaken for spirituality. Such activities on their own cannot lead us to God. Unless a person consciously goes inwards, expands his or her own consciousness, has communion with God and becomes like him, all outward efforts—no matter how noble—will be of no avail.

The different religions encourage us to do charitable works, to pray and to live a moral life. They consider these actions the be-all and end-all of religion. Though these actions are very good, they are not enough, because they cannot take us past the lower heavens of the spiritual regions. Once the

> Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.
>
> *John Woody*

merits earned for such good behavior end, the soul has to return to this plane of consciousness and start all over again, because the heavens where we go to be rewarded for our good deeds are all within the domain of the mind. It is in reference to this complexity of the spiritual planes that Christ says: "In my Father's house there are many mansions" (John 14:2).

Our communication with God is limited when we pray to him with set prayers. If God has the power to grant our wishes, surely he must also have the power to know what we need. It is our own lack of faith which prompts us to beg from him as if he did not know what we need. When we use set prayers, aren't we stopping ourselves from freely expressing our love? Do we need set words to speak to our loved ones? Is God so hard of hearing that we need to repeat our prayers over and over again? Do we worship him out of fear of what he might do to us? Or do we worship him out of vested interests to get what we desire? Either way, prayer motivated by fear or vested interests is very limited. We should worship God only out of love. Rabia Basri, a woman saint of Persia, said: "I wish that I could flood the gates of hell so that no one would worship thee out of fear, and I wish that I could set fire to the gates of paradise so that no one would worship thee for the promises of heaven. Then, everyone would worship thee out of love alone."

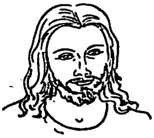
> God is always with us. But we are not always with God. That is why we suffer.
>
> *Swami Atmachaithanya*

Breaking through our limits on love

Love itself is what dissolves all the boundaries and limits we impose on life. Love is the most powerful force in the creation. Without love, life is dry and worthless. Devoid of love a mansion will appear as dreadful as a graveyard. Filled with the light of love, an ill-furnished and dilapidated hut will vibrate with beauty. Love is the richest of all treasures. Without it, there is nothing; and with it, there is everything. As Maharaj Sawan Singh says in *Philosophy of the Masters:*

"Prior to the creation of this world, God was a vast ocean-like All-Consciousness. He was all love, all bliss and self-sufficient. God was everything in Himself and was in a state of blissful quiescence, and His basic form was Love. It was not love for any other being, because none existed. It was for Himself. It was part and parcel of Himself, and He did not have to depend on anything else for this. Such is the indescribable condition of Love."

Love is another name for the spirit of God. The spirit of God is what upholds the universe in balance and harmony. This is why the powerful forces that move in the universe are not in conflict with one another but coexist in perfect balance. If we put ourselves in contact with the spirit of God, we too will enjoy perfect harmony. The same force that upholds the whole creation is also unceasingly supporting and nurturing our own life. That force is love, the positive power of the creation, that includes intelligence, joy and balance. Saints and mystics come to put us in contact with that force so that we may rise above our earthly limitations and rediscover that love in its abundance, balance and joy. S



Jesus

Love is God

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else?

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

Fighting in a Righteous Cause

The Bhagavad Gita

All living beings must die, and out of death comes new life; since death is inevitable, you should not grieve over it. The soul dwells in all living beings, and the soul cannot die; since death cannot kill the soul, you should not grieve over it.

Do your duty without wavering; there is no greater honor than fighting in a righteous cause. To turn your back on a righteous cause, would be to turn your back on duty and honor; it would be to fall into sin. Your friends would say that you had fled from the fight out of fear; they would forget your great deeds of the past, and treat you with scorn. Your enemies would speak about you with contempt and derision; they would laugh at your reputation for courage. Can any fate be more shameful?

Prepare to fight with peace in your heart. Whether you enjoy pleasure or suffer pain, be at peace. Whether you advance, or are forced back, be at peace. Whether you win or lose, be at peace. If you are at peace within yourself, you cannot sin.

The Birth of Sai Baba

Mihir D Desai

In the State of Maharashtra, there was a small village named Patri, situated among greenfields, trees and other natural settings and taking the villagers to divine heights. The atmosphere was such that even the animals and birds were at peace. The whole region was blessed with divinity. The water flowing in the rivulet adjoining this village had the effects of the water from river Ganga, curing several ailments. In this village, there lived a pious couple named Ganga Bhavajya and Devagiri Amma. They were leading a happy and contended life. They did not have any property worth the name. But they had inner satisfaction.

Ganga Bhavajya used to ferry a boat in the adjoining river and lived on this meager earnings. Though, they were poor in terms of wealth but they were contended, tolerant and peaceful. Ganga Bhavajya used to worship Lord Shiva and Devagiri Amma used to worship

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Gowri Devi (Parvati). Under any circumstances, the worship of Lord Siva and Gowri Devi would be done before the couple attended to other items of work for they believed that there was divine presence in their house, protecting them every moment. But sadly they were not blessed with children. So they used to pray to Lord Siva and Parvati to bless them with children.

One day in Kailash, Siva told Parvati that the time for him to take birth on Earth has come as promised to Bhoodevi and other Adi Devatas. Then Parvati pleaded with Lord Siva that she be allowed to take birth on Earth and assist him in his Avatar. But he did not agree, that in his new Avatar, he proposed to practice strictly what he intended to preach and Parvati would have no role to play in his "Fakir" life. He then showed Parvati, Ganga Bhavajya and Devagiri Amma on the Earth, telling her that they are the couple to whom he would be born.

The Parvathi said that since she would not take birth on Earth along with Lord Siva, they should visit Ganga Bhavajya and Devagiri Amma now. He agreed and in the first instance sent Ganga Devi to fill Patri village and its surroundings with water. There was a heavy downpour, inundating the village and surroundings with water. Fearing that boats would be washed away in the floods, Ganga Bhavajya proceeded to the nearby river to take care of

> Justice that love gives is a surrender; justice that law gives is a punishment.
>
> *Mahatma Gandhi*

the boats after taking his night meal.

At about 9 p.m. in the night, there was a knock at the door of Ganga Bhavajya's house. Thinking that her husband had returned, Devagiri Amma opened the door. But it was not her husband. An unknown old man entered the house. In this small village, Devagiri Amma knew everyone, but this old man was unknown to her and that too coming at such late hour. She tried to find out who he was. The old man pleaded with her to allow him to remain inside the house for sometime as it was very cold outside. Being a pious lady, Devagiri Amma asked the old man to sleep in the verandah, while she went inside her room, locking the door from inside. After sometime, the old man knocked at her door. She opened the door. The old man said, "Mother, I am hungry. Please give me some food." She felt helpless since whatever food she had cooked had been eaten and nothing was left. She searched in the house for some eatables but found only a small quantity of flour. She mixed this flour with curds and served it to the old man and he gracefully ate it. As it was night she then went into her room and prepared to go to sleep, locking the door from inside. Again after sometime there was a knock at her door. She opened the door only to again find the old man standing there. He told her that his legs were paining and requested her to massage them.

> Doing good to others is not a duty. It is a joy, for it increases your own health and happiness.
>
> *Zoroaster*

She was perplexed at the way in which a complete stranger was behaving when her husband was not in the house. She wondered whether the old man was really a human being or whether Lord Siva had come to test her. Without knowing what to do under such circumstances, she wept and prayed to Goddess Parvathi. She went out through the back door to procure the service of two or three servants for massaging the legs of the old man as she was not willing to do so by herself. She was willing to pay them liberally, but found none. She returned disappointed and wondered what to do now, whether she ought to massage the legs for the old man or not. Who was this old man? She prayed to Parvathi wholeheartedly to show her way out of this predicament. The old man knocked at her door again. Just then a woman entered through the back door and addressed Devagiri Amma, "Mother, it seems you came to my house to engage me for massaging the legs of an old man. But at that time I was not in the house. Now I have come, please tell me to whom I should do service?"

Devagiri Amma felt very happy. She presumed that on hearing her prayers, Parvathi must have sent this woman and she expressed her gratitude to the Goddess Parvathi. She sent the women to the verandah to massage the legs of the old man while she went to her room and shut the door. After some time, she opened the door again but

> What is beyond the mind, has no boundary, in it our senses end.
>
> *Mira Bai*

she did not find either the old man or the women sent to massage his legs. But in their place she saw Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi. Both were standing in a dazzling globe of colorful lights. The whole house was filled with fragrance of flowers. All the Adi Devtas were in the heaven offering celestial flowers to their lotus feet. Her happiness knew no bounds and she fell at their feet. Then Parvathi blessed her, "You shall have one son and one daughter." On hearing this she again fell at the feet of Lord Siva who blessed her, "Mother, I am pleased with your devotion, I will myself take birth as your third child." She was so wonderstruck that she lost her body consciousness and was in the state of ecstasy. By the time she got up, both Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi had disappeared.

She laid awake the whole night, waiting for her husband to return, to break the happy news of the visit of Lord Shiva and Parvathi to their house. She remembered only the vision of Lord Shiva and Parvathi, whether she closed or opened her eyes. At daybreak, her husband returned home and she narrated everything to him. But he did not believe it. He told her sarcastically that she had gone mad or was dreaming. How could the Gods come to our house? However much she tried to convince him about their visit he did not believe her.

In due course, Devagiri Amma gave birth to a male child and a female child a year after.

If you begin to live life looking for the God that is all around you, every moment becomes a prayer.

Frank Bianco

As the children were born after so many years and that too blessed by Parvathi Devi. Ganga Bhavajya started believing the visit of Gods to their house and the boons granted to his wife. From then onwards a lot of changes came in him and he decided to do penance to have a vision and blessings of Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi. He began to think that family attachments were obstacles for his penance.

While such ideas were taking concrete shape in him, the third child started growing in the womb of Devagiri Amma. One day, Ganga Bhavajya took firm decision and informed his wife that he was retiring to the forest. As duty bounds, Devagiri Amma followed her husband. Without any money, placing complete faith in Lord Siva and Parvathi, they proceeded towards an unknown destination in thick forest. On one hand, Devagiri Amma felt elated that shortly Lord Siva would be born to her. On the other hand, she was worried and fearful of the aimless journey through the forests. With these mixed feelings, they continued their journey.

It was 28th day of September 1835, Ganga Bhavajya and Devagiri Amma were continuing their journey. The sun was rising throwing light red colored rays on the Earth. Devagiri Amma went into labor pains. She slowly reached a big banyan tree and lay down on its shade. Goddess Parvathi was beside her unseen, giving her courage. All other Gods were

> All human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, passion, and desire.
>
> *Aristotle*

witnessing from above, this unique occasion of Lord Siva being born in a human form on Earth. This new "Avatar" would put an end to religious fanaticism, jealousies, hatred, arrogance, egoism and attachments prevalent in the human and would generate peace, knowledge, love and equality among them. The Adi Devtas showered flowers from heaven above, unseen and jubilant over the occasion. Great sages all over the world for a moment became still and in that state witnessed the arrival of Lord Siva in human form as Devagiri Amma's child. The womb of Devagiri Amma was glowing with light and she could feel the infinite divinity within herself. Finally, Devagiri Amma delivered the child. The child was glowing. Who can know the Lord? He has taken a human birth to save mankind. No one knew that the new born Avatar of Lord Siva would one day be known as Shirdi Sai Baba and that he would respond at once to the prayers of devotees from anywhere and anytime, that he would show the way to a number of devotees for attaining salvation by becoming their Sadguru, and that even after his Samadhi he would protect his devotees.

Only My devotees love for Me pulls Me to take a birth.
– Sai Baba

Devagiri Amma was very happy that Lord Siva himself was born to her. But Ganga Bhavajya was not satisfied by looking at the human child form

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

Benjamin Franklin

of Lord Siva. He was determined to see the real Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi, as was seen by his wife. After sometime, he prepared to set out for his journey. It was a testing moment for Devagiri Amma. On one side was her husband and she was duty bound to follow her. On the other side, it is the just born child, apart from her weakness due to delivery. Finally, she decided to follow her husband, leaving the child in the forest. She prepared a small bed of leaves and spread a soft cloth over it. She placed her newborn child on the bed. She began weeping as other mother do and the warm tears began to fall on the child. These tears were the last attachments between mother and child. She wept bitterly for not being in a position to provide food and shelter for her child. Perhaps, she was not aware that Lord Siva who protects the whole Universe, does not require her protection. Such is the motherly love.

No such thoughts were in Ganga Bhavajya. His aim was to have vision of Lord Siva only. For achieving this, family bonds and attachments would be hurdles. So he decided to be away from such attachments and go into forest and do penance. He started to proceed towards his goal, his wife was following him for every step taken by her, the motherly love towards her newborn child began to melt into tears which flowed from her eyes continuously. She kept looking backwards at her child though advancing. The tears blocked her vision and she was able to

> There is neither creation nor destruction, neither destiny nor free will, neither path nor achievement; This is the final truth.
>
> *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

see only a blurred image of her child. After proceeding for some more distance, she lost sight of her child completely and she followed her husband blindly. Though Ganga Bhavajya went with detachment, he observed the physical weakness and helplessness in his wife Devagiri Amma. Sympathy evoked in him, but he thought that he should not succumb to such weakness, and so started proceeding further. But Devagiri Amma was too weak to walk straight and her sight was getting blurred, her tongue drying up with thirst. She had no physical strength at all. But as a devout woman, she followed her husband slowly. With great difficulty, they moved ahead. Ganga Bhavajya stopped near a freshwater tank. He could not proceed further after seeing the condition of his wife. He tried to suppress his feelings unsuccessfully. All his feelings and sympathies for his wife gushed out and he thought Lord Siva would not give him Darshan if he left his wife alone and proceeded. He went to her and started attending on her. After quenching her thirst, she went into deep sleep, fully exhausted. In the meantime, a banjara (a nomad) who was passing by saw them and told them that if they did not leave that place before dusk, there was a danger from wild animals. So saying, he took them along with him for some distance and showed them a hut. He told them that this hut belonged to him and they could rest in it. After sometime, the banjara's wife brought food for

> If you will grow, be humble as grass and patient as the tree and prayerful as the daisy that turns its face to the sun.
>
> *Sadhu Vaswani*

them and after serving them they all sat together. The banjara couple heard the story of their guests attentively. Then they addressed the guests.

"The norms for leading an ordinary type of life are prescribed in the Vedas. They are of four kinds, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Every man should follow these four during his lifetime. The woman, while being the life companion, should assist the man in attaining them. This is the speciality in Hindu culture. But having brought forth three children, you left them mercilessly and took to the forests. Your action goes against the Dharma. It is good to desire a vision of Lord Siva. If that is life's aim, one should be a sanyasi and not grihastha (family man). But being grihastha, forgetting one's duties towards family, one should not seek God, for this is not correct.

After performing all your duties only you should take to Vanaprastha (retiring to the forests) and then seek God. This is Dharma Marga. As you have already abandoned your three children you should now proceed. Though you are husband and wife, in future you should not have any bodily attachments, but concentrate on doing penance for Atma Sakshatkara and then for the Sakshatkara of Lord Siva. There is a village named Nivasa about 150 miles from here and from there you proceed another 20 miles and do your penance."

Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome.

Issac Asimov

The words of the banjara was like the chanting of the Vedas and Bhavajya decided to do penance with his wife for the Sakshatkara of Lord Siva. In the meantime, the banjara gave them two wild fruits from the forest and made them eat, by which they got rid of all bodily ailments, attaining divine powers necessary for doing penance. Late in the night they slept. When Ganga Bhavajya woke up in the morning, he found neither the banjara couple nor the hut. All that had taken place the previous night appeared to them as a dream.

Devagiri Amma regained her physical health and was happy. After travelling for eleven days, they reached the place on the banks of Godavari river, as indicated by the banjara and started their penance for years. Many used to visit them and learn spiritual lessons from them. The devotees named Devagiri Amma as Dwarakamai. Devagiri means Govardhanagiri, the mountain lifted by Lord Krishna and the place surrounding it is Dwaraka, and Aai means mother. Similarly, Ganga Bhavajya was named Gurudhan because he was imparting knowledge to the seekers. So, the names acquired by the parents of Sai Baba, in the Jnana Marga, were Gurudhan and Dwarakamai. As many people started visiting them, it caused disturbance for their penance, and so they shifted into the interior forest. Both used to be in a state of Samadhi for days together.

> Every day is my best day; this is my life; I am not going to have this moment again.
>
> *Bernie Siegel*

On the golden Kailash mountain, Lord Siva should have been in the company of Parvathi and other Gods. But in his new "Avatar" he was under the Banyan tree, as a newborn child, moving his legs and hands playfully and waiting for the person who would find him and look after him. Lord Siva knew who that person was. That Mahatma named Roshan Sha came in the form of Fakir (medicant). When he was walking with his wife, he heard the cries of a small child. As they did not have any child, he picked up the child and gave him to his wife as a gift from "Allah". Ⓢ

Secret of Higher Life

Your worldly intelligence cannot fathom the ways of God. He cannot be recognized by mere cleverness of intelligence. You may benefit from God, but you cannot explain Him. Your explanations are merely guesses, attempts to cloak your ignorance in pompous expressions. Bring something into your daily practice as evidence of your having known the secret of higher life from Me. Show that you have greater brotherliness. Speak with more sweetness and self-control. Bear defeat as well as victory with calm resignation.

Bhagavan Sri Sathya Saibaba

Leading to the Truth

Sri Ramakrishna

Different people call on [God] by different names: some as Allah, some as God, and others as Krishna, Siva, and Brahman. It is like the water in a lake. Some drink it at one place and call it 'jal', others at another place and call it 'pani', and still others at a third place and call it 'water'. The Hindus call it 'jal', the Christians 'water', and the Muslims 'pani'. But it is one and the same thing."

"One can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope; so too, diverse are the ways of approaching God, and each religion in the world shows one of the ways. . . . A truely religious man should think that other religions are also so many paths leading to the Truth. One should always maintain an attitude of respect towards other religions."

The Absolute Truth

Sikhism

God is the absolute truth; his name is truth. The language of God is the language of infinite love. People constantly pray to him, asking him for more and more; and with unflagging love he answers their prayers.

What should you offer, that you might see his kingdom? What should you say, that you might please him? In the fragrance of dawn meditate upon him, glorifying his name and reflecting on his greatness. He will put a robe of honor upon you, and guide you to the gate of salvation. Thus, you will know that God is truth, that he is the source of all light.

God was not created, nor was his power established. He exists by his own power. Those who worship him, are honored by him. Sing his praises, and let his love flow into your heart. Thus, your sorrows will be swept away, and you will be carried to the place of bliss.

Listen to the wise teachers who have heard God's word; there are many such teachers. By their instruction knowledge is acquired; and then you will know that God is everywhere.

God Himself

In the realm of action, effort is supreme,
Nothing else prevails.
There dwell doughty warriors brave and strong,
With hearts full of godliness,
And celestial maidens of great loveliness
Who sing their praise.
They cannot die nor be beguiled
For God Himself in their hearts resides.
There too are congregations of holy men
Who rejoice, for the Lord in their midst presides.

In the realm of truth is the Formless One
Who, having created, watches His creation
And graces us with the blessed vision.
There are the lands, the earths and the spheres
Of whose description there is no limit;
There by a myriad forms are a myriad purposes fulfilled,
What He ordains is in them instilled.
What He beholds, thinks and contemplates,
O Nanak, is too hard to state.

Yogi Vemana

Jnana Bharathi

House named body, swept every day
Smeared with cow-dung, plastered, made fit
Departs at last the hypocrite *jiva*
Beloved of the Bounteous, Vema, listen.

Images of wonder are all the animate
Therein composite of five elements is woman
For knowers body is only so
Beloved of the Bounteous, Vema, listen.

In atom are all the worlds
Within itself is atom hidden
Man stilling his mind thus attains liberation
Beloved of the Bounteous, Vema, listen.

Is God as such in another land
Ever with man is He in body alone
Mounting vehicles He drives them fast
Beloved of the Bounteous, Vema, listen.

Worldly Success

Islam

There were people in the past who received Scriptures; and yet, despite living to a great age, they hardened their hearts – and many of them did great evil. Is it not time for true believers to submit to God's warning, embracing the truth he has revealed?

Remember that God restores the earth to life after it has died. 'We have made plain to you our revelations, that you may grow in wisdom.'

Men and women who give generously, and who make generous loans in the name of God, will be repaid double; they will receive a noble recompense. Those who believe in God and his apostle, are regarded by God as his true and faithful servants; they will have their reward and their light. 'But those who reject our revelations, refusing to believe them, are the heirs of hell.'

Remember that the present life in this world is merely a sport and a pastime; a time when people play foolish games, competing agaisnt one another for greater wealth and larger families. The present life is like a plant that flourishes after rain: the gardener is glad to see it grow; but soon it will wither, turning yellow, and become worthless stubble. Success in this world counts for nothing.

Therefore seek urgently the forgiveness of God, that you many enter paradise; it is as vast as the sky and the earth, and has been prepared for those who believe in God and his apostle. God's grace is infinite; and he bestows it as he likes.

Know What You Can Control and What You Can't

Epictetus

Happiness and freedom begin with a clear understanding of one principle: Some things are within our control, and some things are not. It is only after you have faced up to this fundamental rule and learned to distinguish between what you can and can't control that inner tranquility and outer effectiveness become possible.

Within our control are our own opinions, aspirations, desires, and the things that repel us. These areas are quite rightly our concern, because they are directly subject to our influence. We always have a choice about the contents and character of our inner lives.

Outside our control, however, are such things as what kind of body we have, whether we're born into wealth or strike it rich, how we are regarded by others, and our status in society. We must remember that those things are externals and are therefore not our concern. Trying to control or to change what we can't only results in torment.

Remember: The things within our power are naturally at our disposal, free from any restraint or hindrance; but those things outside our power are weak, dependent, or determined by the whims and actions of others. Remember, too, that if you think that you have free rein over things that are naturally beyond your control, or if you attempt to adopt the affairs of others as your own, your pursuits will be thwarted and you will become a frustrated, anxious, and fault-finding person. Ⓢ

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Principles of Vedanta

Swami Rama Tirtha

Keep yourself perfectly happy and at rest, no matter what happens—sickness, death, hunger, calumny, or anything.

Be cheerful and at peace on the ground of your Godhead, to which you shalt ever be true.

The world, its inmates, relations and all are vanishing quantities if you please to assert the Majesty of your real Self.

Inspect, observe and watch or do anything, but do all that in the light of your True Self, that is to say, forget not that your Self is above all that and beyond all wants.

You really require nothing. Why should you feel a desire for anything? Do your work with the grace of a universal Ruler, for pleasure, fun, or mere amusement's sake. Never, never feel that you want anything.

When you live these principles of *Vedanta*, spontaneously will the sweet aroma of Truth proceed in all directions from you.

Before falling asleep—when the eyes begin to close—every night or noon, make a firm resolve in your mind to find yourself an embodiment of Vedantic Truth on waking up.

When you wake up, before doing anything else just bring to your mind vividly the determination dwelt upon before falling asleep.

Whenever you can, just chant or hum to yourself *Om*.

Glimpses from Scriptures

The Twin Verses

The Dhammapada

All that we are is the result of what we have thought it is founded on our thoughts: it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me"—in those who harbor such thoughts hatred will never cease.

"He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me"—in those who do not harbor such thoughts hatred will cease.

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love—this is an old rule.

The world does not know that we must all come to an end here; but those who know it, their quarrels cease at once.

He who lives looking for pleasures only, his senses uncontrolled, immoderate in his food, idle, and weak, Mara (the tempter) will certainly overthrow him, as the wind throws down a weak tree.

He who lives without looking for pleasures, his senses well controlled, moderate in his food, faithful and strong, him Mara will certainly not overthrow, any more than the wind throws down a rocky mountain.

He who wishes to put on the yellow dress without having cleansed himself from sin who disregards also temperance and truth, is unworthy of the yellow dress.

But he who has cleansed himself from sin, is well grounded in all virtues, and endowed also with temperance and truth: he is indeed worthy of the yellow dress.

They who imagine truth in untruth, and see untruth in truth, never arrive at truth, but follow vain desires.

They who know truth in truth, and untruth in untruth, arrive at truth, and follow true desires.

As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.

As rain does not breakthrough a well-thatched house, passion will not breakthrough a well-reflecting mind.

The evil-doer mourns in this world, and he mourns in the next; he mourns in both. He mourns and suffers when he sees the evil result of his own work.

The virtuous man delights in this world, and he delights in the next; he delights in both. He delights and rejoices, when he sees the purity of his own work.

The evil-doer suffers in this world, and he suffers in the next; he suffers in both. He suffers when he thinks of the evil he has done; he suffers more when going on the evil path.

The virtuous man is happy in this world, and he is happy in the next; he is happy in both. He is happy when he thinks of the good he has done; he is still more happy when going on the good path.

The thoughtless man, even if he can recite a large portion of the law, but is not a doer of it, has no share in the priesthood but is like a cowherd counting the cows of others.

The follower of the law, even if he can recite only a small portion of the law, but, having forsaken passion and hatred and foolishness, possesses true knowledge and serenity of mind, he, caring for nothing in this world or that to come, has indeed a share in the priesthood.

The Secret of Inner Serenity

Swami Chidananda

Radiant Atman! Beloved *sadhakas* engaged in spiritual *sadhana* while leading a spiritual life of seva, *bhakti, dhyana* and *atma-jnana* as propounded by Guru Maharaj Swami Sivanandaji! You are living a life of service, selflessly and motivelessly done, without any desire for attaining personal gain, a life of devotion and worship with an intention of drawing down the grace of God, a life of daily meditation to proceed towards a deeper and deeper understanding and a higher vision of the Reality, and a life of constant philosophical enquiry and discrimination to remove the veil of ignorance and attain illumination, enlightenment and Self-realization, *atma-jnana*. For Gurudev propounded and declared a harmony between these paths—the Yoga synthesizing all of them—integral Yoga.

Gurudev embodied all these things. He was a *jnāni.* He was a *parābhakta*. He was a *haṭha yogi* as well. And throughout his whole life he was nothing if not a selfless *karma yogi,* a servant of all, ever wishing to serve. In him we found the personification, the living embodiment of all that

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he preached and taught. *Samatvam yoga uchyate* (Evenness of mind is called Yoga), *yōgaḥ karmasu kausalam* (Yoga is skill in action), *yogaschitta-vrittinirōdhaḥ* (Yoga is control of the modifications of the mind)—all these things he had within him. His mind was perfectly under his control. He knew how to be in the midst of activities and yet above activity, always serene, always actionless. He knew the secret of *akarma* (non-action) in *karma* (action), and at the same time, we found in him a wonderous, amazing example of absolute *samatva* (equanimity). He was a *sthitaprajna* (one whose wisdom is steady) personified. We found in Gurudev *tulyanindā-stutirmouni santuṣhtō yēna kenachit* (one to whom censure and praise are equal and who is content with anything). We also found in him that samatva, equanimity, resulting from *sukhē duhkhē samē kritvā labhālābhau jayajayou* (having made pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same).

He was ever the same, never allowing anything to affect him or to alter his inner state of absolute equanimity, his inner state of being established firmly in the Self, established in the supreme Yoga of oneness with the eternal Reality. We wanted to see a *yōgasthaḥ kurukarmāṇi* (one performing action remaining steadfast in Yoga). We found it in Gurudev. He was ever in a state of Yoga and ever active in the service of the *virāṭ,* the visible God in manifestation. We saw it with our own eyes.

Secret of Serenity

What is the secret of this *samatva*? How do these great

> We may think of the Divine as a fire whose outgoing warmth pervades the Universse.
>
> *Plotinus*

ones keep themselves in a state of absolute serenity? Is it due to their wisdom? Is it due to their devotion? Is it due to their meditation? It is due to all of these. For in Gurudev we found them all—highest devotion, supreme wisdom and perfect meditation—and the result was his absolute serenity.

How is it that these great ones, who have approached the state of illumination and Reality-consciousness, God-experience, through seemingly varied and different paths, are seen to be established in the same state? What is their inner spiritual content that makes them impervious to all the assailments of the constantly ever-changing *dvandvas* (pairs of opposites) of the universe?

The content is ultimately the same. The *jnani* is established in the full knowledge and perception: *brahma satyam jagan-mithya* (God alone is real, the world is unreal). He is established in the full awareness of this experience. There is only one ultimate, unchanging Reality. All else is mainly a play of vanishing names and forms. It is an ever-changing phenomenal appearance only. Everything that is perceived as a sense-object is subject to change, decay and dissolution—*yaddṛiśyam tannasyam* (everything perceived is subject to decay). Everything here perceived through any one of the five senses—seen, heard, tasted, touched and smelt—is subject to change, decay and dissolution, even before your very eyes.

Therefore, being fully established in this awareness, they are not affected if things change, if persons change, if situations change. They are not

Do not weep or sob over your worries. Search for a solution to get out of the causes of your worries.

Vidura

the least bit affected if things start decaying and disintegrating before their eyes. They are not the least affected if things dissolve, perish and disappear. They know that this is the way of all life. Therefore, they look upon it with serenity born out of knowledge. *Tasmāt aparihāryē 'rthe na tvam sochitum arhasi* (Therefore, over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve).

Thus, they are established in a state of perfect equanimity, knowing the real nature of this world: it always changes, comes and goes, there is nothing stable here. That is the inner state of the *jnani-tasya prajnā pratiṣthitā* (his wisdom is steady)—whose inner being is established in a state of firmness, enduring and abiding firmness, who is unperturbed, not agitated in the least bit, never ruffled.

For, it is only after having attained this state of wonderful calmness that they were able to meditate and realize God. Real meditation is impossible in a ruffled state of the interior, in a being whose mind is constantly thrown out of balance. Real meditation is impossible unless there is an overcoming of all agitation. If a mind is prone to being agitated, it cannot meditate. Agitation is a weakness of the mind. *S̃ama,* one of the *ṣhaṭsampattis* (six-fold virtues), is the state of being absolutely calm, cool and equanimous within the *antahkarana.*

Therefore, they know *brahma satyam jagan-mithya;* they know everything is *svapnavat* (like a dream); they know all this will pass away. And they are constantly in this awareness. It is not only an intellectual knowledge, a fact of information that they have gleaned from books or lectures,

> Children begin by loving their parents; after a time they judge them; rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.
>
> *Oscar Wilde*

but a fact that they have experienced, known directly. This is the *jnani's* secret of being perfectly established.

And in the case of the *bhakta,* the devotee of the Lord, long ago he decided, even before entering into this life spiritual, that God is the only thing worth living for. God is the one and the only thing that has any real value. In the estimation of the *bhakta*, God alone counts, God alone matters. All other things are just *alpa* (insignificant); they are nothing, they are equal to zero. God is the one and only supreme One, the Reality.

Therefore, they are concerned only with God. They know that all other things are of no importance. No matter what happens, it does not matter. God alone matters. All other matters do not matter. Everything is cipher, nothing, compared to God. And therefore the entire sense of values of a devotee of the Lord, a *bhakta,* is God and God alone. He alone matters. He alone is important. All other things—no matter. "How they are, let them be, let them be. What do I care, what do I care?"

Therefore, having made God his be-all and end-all, the summum bonum, the one thing alone worth striving for, worth being constantly centered in, all other things become as nothing to the real devotee, to the real *bhagavat-prēmi*. And therefore no matter what happens, he is not perturbed. He says: "Yes, but it is not important. Let things happen. Whatever it be, I shall endure it and bear it. Because, I am concerned not with them, I am concerned with God, I am concerned with the supreme Divine Reality."

God Alone is Real

Thus, becoming firmly convinced of the importance of

> Love is the joy of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the gods.
>
> *Plato*

that one and only Being called God, and that all other lesser things are not important, not worthwhile becoming upset or worried about, not worthwhile becoming agitated about, the devotee of the Lord, the lover of the Supreme One, is ever in a state of serenity, of inner balance in all situations, under all conditions, no matter what happens to him or the world or anyone else. "God alone is real, God alone is important, the one supreme value. God alone I take seriously. Other things I allow to happen as the Supreme Being wills: Thy will be done. Whatever be Your will, that I bow down to, I accept. Thou art all-knowing, all-wise, omnipotent, all-powerful. What You will, You can do. In as much as You are doing everything with full wisdom, I am not here to question You but to accept."

So he is in a state of acceptance. Never agitated, ever serene, knowing the whole world is in the hands of God. "Let things happen as they are. He knows. He has the power to do anything He wants. He has the wisdom to know what is the right thing. And He does it with infinite love and infinite compassion. Therefore, I do not question." Thus, the devotee is established in a state of sereneness, fully trusting in the all-wisdom, the all-love, the all-justice and the all-ability of God.

Thus either way, the *bhakta* and *jnāni* go through life and its situations established in a state of oneness, absolute oneness. This is the inner mechanics of *samatva,* of *sthitaprajnatva.* It is the inner mechanics of the state of a true Yogi, a true meditator, a true devotee and a true *jnani.* For their inner state is based upon the truths of the scriptures.

God bless you all to attain that state and be based upon absolute equanimity, *samatva, samata* (balanced state of mind)! May you be blessed with success in your spiritual practices and attain illumination! Ⓢ

Sri Sarada Devi

God in Human Form

After someone finished her sweeping and threw the broom into a corner, Mother said, "How strange, my dear! The work is finished, and you throw it away carelessly. It takes almost the same time to put it away slowly and carefully as to throw it away. Should you despise a thing just because it is insignificant? 'Him that you save, saves you in turn.' Won't you need it again? Besides, this thing too forms a part of our household. From that point of view also it deserves some consideration. You must give each one his due share of honor. Even a broom must be shown some honor. The smallest work must be done with reverence.

Don't be afraid. Human birth is full of suffering and one has to endure everything patiently, taking the name of God. None, not even God in human form, can escape the sufferings of body and mind.

I tell you one thing my child — if you want peace, do not find fault with others. Rather, see your own faults. Learn to make the world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; the whole world is your own.

Tvam shaktīreva jagātamakhilaprabhāvā
Tvam nirmitam cha sakalam khalu bhāvamātram
Tvam krīdase nijavinirmata-mohajaalē
Nāṭyē yathā viharatē svakrute natō vai

You are the power which achieves everything for the world; the entire world of created things is yourself; even as a dancer plays in a self-created dance you sport in the many illusions created by yourself.

Know and Live Your Faith

The Bible

It becomes clear from the gospel that we should know, believe and confess our faith.

One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (called the Twin), was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

Thomas said to them, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later the disciples were together again indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands; then stretch out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting, and believe!"

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Do you believe because you see me? How happy are those who believe without seeing me!"

Happiness is Making Others Happy

Priya & Sanjay Tandon

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back except an occasional treat when he was allowed to sit for a few minutes.

The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadended and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

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As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band – he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced.........a blank wall!

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had

> Look at yourself in the mirror of introspection. That is the way you can become flawless in the spiritual mirror of your soul.
>
> *Paramahansa Yogananda*

described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue....There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy. Ⓢ

Work Within

The Master patiently heard a disciple complain about her husband. Finally he said, "You would be happier if you were a better wife."

Shocked, she asked, "How should I be a better wife?"

"By giving up your efforts to make him a better husband!"

Another disciple asked the Master permission to go and teach others the Truth. The Master simply said, "Wait". A year later he repeated his request to the Master, who said, "Wait", once again. Year after year, this was repeated until finally the exasperated disciple asked, "But when will I be ready to teach?" the Master replied, "When your excessive eagerness to teach has left you."

King and his Hawk

A king had trained a hawk for purposes of hunt and reconnoitre. He used to take the hawk with him whenever he went out. Once the king and his huntsmen were riding home through a valley between the desert dunes. The king felt very thirsty. As he rode along the valley he found, to his great joy, some water dribbling down the edge of a rock. he at once dismounted and held out his silver goblet to collect some water. Meanwhile, his pet hawk which he carried with him, flew out and began to circle over the dunes.

After some time, when the cup was full, the king raised it to drink the crystal clear water with great eagerness. But before he could do so, the hawk suddenly swooped down from above and flapped its wing against the cup, so that all the water was spilled.

The king looked up and saw his pet hawk alight upon the top of the rock from where the water trickled down. He picked up the cup and held it again to collect the trickling drops. He had to wait a long time until the cup was full, and then when he was about to drink the water, the hawk dived down as before and knocked out the cup from the king's hand.

The king grew very angry. He collected the water again with great patience and for the third time the hawk did not allow the king to drink it.

The king was furious by now. He drew out his sword and shouted at the hawk: "This is the last time. If you prevent me from drinking the water, you will pay with your life." He collected the water again patiently, and this time he was wary with his sword as he raised the cup to drink the water. The hawk did come down again and knock out the cup, but as it did so, the king cut off its head with a quick sweep of the sword.

He grunted, "Now you had your lesson!" As he looked down for his cup, he saw that it had fallen inside a crevice where he could not get down. So he began to climb up the rock to drink from the source. When he reached the top he found there a pool of water inside which there was a dead poisonous snake. The king was stupefied. He no longer remembered his thirst but only thought of his hasty action which resulted in the killing of the hawk which saved his life. The king then resolved, "I have learnt a bitter lesson today, i.e., never to do anything in haste."

Haste is the mother of grief. Develop discriminative power. Think well, and then act. Look before you leap.

Mythology
John Dowson

Kasyapa

A Vedic sage to whom some hymns are attributed. All authorities agree in assigning to him a large part in the work of creation. According to the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas, he was the son of Marichi, the son of Brahma, and he was father of Vivaswat, the father of Manu, the progenitor of mankind. The Satapatha Brahmana gives a different and not very intelligible account of his origin thus:— "Having assumed the form of a tortoise, Prajāpati created offspring. That which he created he made (*akarot*); hence the word kūrma (tortoise). Kasyapa means tortoise; hence men say, 'All creatures are descendants of Kasyapa.' This tortoise is the same as Aditya." The Atharva vēda says, "The self-born Kasyapa sprang from Time," and Time is often identical with Viṣhṇu. The Mahabharata and later authorities agree in representing that Kasyapa married Aditi and twelve other daughters of Daksha. Upon Aditi he begat the Adityas, headed by Indra, and also Vivaswat, and "to Vivaswat was born the wise and mighty Manu." The Ramāyana and Viṣhṇu Purana also state that "Viṣhṇu was born as a dwarf, the son of Aditi and Kasyapa." By his other twelve wives, he had a numerous and very diversified offspring: demons, nagas, reptiles, birds, and all kinds of living things. He was thus the father of all, and as such is sometimes called Prajāpati. He is one of the seven great Rishis, and he appears as the priest of Parasurāma and Ramachandra. Ⓢ

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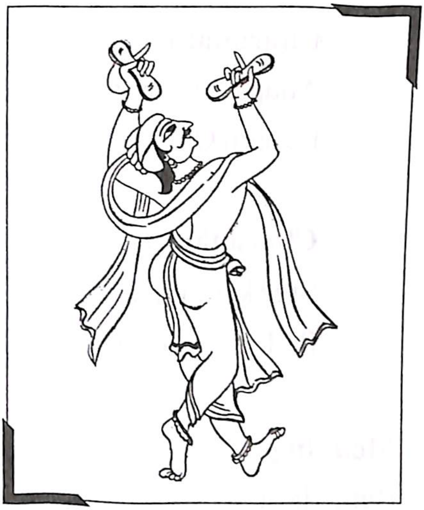
Divine Songs



Sri Ramadasu Kriti

Raagam: Varaali; Taalam: Adi

C Vijaychandra Kumar

Pallavi

Idigo bhadraadri gautami adigo chudandi

Charanam 1

Mudamuto seetha mudita lakshmanulu

Kalsikoluvaga raghupathi yundedi

Charanam 2

Charu swarna prakaara gopura

Dwaramulato sundaramai yundedi

Charanam 3

Anupamaanamai ati sundaramai
Danaru Chakramu dhaga dhaga merisedi

Charanam 4

Sree karamuga sree ramadasuni
Prakatamuga broche prabhu vaasamu

Meaning: This kriti is one of the famous renditions of Sree Ramadasa. He describes the temple of Sree Rama with lots of bhakti. Everything relating to the temple looks great and marvelous.

Pallavi: Hey! Behold! This is the hill called Bhadraadri, and see the Gautami river. (The river Godavari was also called Gautami river. It is said that this river was later called Goda-sabari and with the passage of time this is being called Godavari.)

Charanam 1: In this temple, the Lord Raghupati flanked by Seetha Maatha and Lakshmana has chosen as his abode (to bless the devotees).

Charanam 2: The temple is beautified with golden gopuras on the prakara, the exterior wall. Behold!

Charanam 3: The most beautiful and incomparable Chakra is glittering. Behold!

Charanam 4: The abode where the Lord very auspiciously is blessing Sree Ramadasa is this temple. Behold! Ⓢ

Book Review

Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Edited by Prof. Laxmi Narain, formerly Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Osmania University, Hyderabad, price Rs. 200, pp. 419, distributed by Motilal Banarsidass, (E-mail: mlbd@vsnl.com) (Website: www.mlbd.com), is a collection of inspiring and spiritually-elevating accounts by 160 persons, including 28 foreigners from across the globe, who visited/interacted with Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), at Tiruvannmalai, South India, where he lived.

Sri Ramana Maharshi is a unique shining star on the spiritual firmament of our country, which is legitimately proud of its rich and variegated heritage as well as of its saints, seers and sage from times immemorial.

The Maharshi's message is the summation and essence of the ancient Indian philosophy, that is, *atman* is God itself and can be realized through persistent and intensive introspection on the question - Who am I? It is essentially the same approach as enunciated by celebrated Greek philosopher Socrates – 'Man know thy self. The unexamined life is not worth living.'

Persons of great distinction and knowledge, whose accounts are contained in the book, refer to the Maharshi as *jivanmukta*, that is, a person emancipated while yet in the physical body.

Pieces in this compilation provide inspiration for nobler living. They guide one to live every day life, not as mere physical entity, but as unseparated fragment of the Divine – caring, affectionate and pure in

thought, word and deed. Purity comes as we try to rise in our consciousness above selfishness, self-identity and self-centeredness.

The following excerpts from the reminiscences of two foreigners, should provide an idea of the nature and character of the book:

"All theories, all acquired acknowledge fall into dust when standing face to face with the Maharshi. One gets peace that passeth all human understanding. His face is full of inspiration, unearthly serenity and power, of infinite kindness and understanding. He reigns in silence. In his presence, the mind gets tuned to silence, and does not dare to indulge in endless questioning as it used to. His spiritual alchemy could transmute the hard materialism into something pure and noble.

"In some wonderful way, the Maharshi seemed to supervise the inner processes in us, just as an operator watches the working of a complicated machine, which he knows thoroughly. He mysteriously helped me in having the inner experience, but how remains closed to me. A man emerges from these experiences greatly changed and often with a totally different conception about everything in this world. For myself, I call it the 'spiritual alchemy of the Master'. Being near the Maharshi one feels the presence of God as a matter of course – no arguments or proofs are necessary.

The greatest miracle is the Maharshi himself. I know that not all are able to feel or even guess it. Such miracles can be known only by plunging into silence and into our own depths. In the presence of the Maharshi, we are able to find intuitively by ourselves the proper attitude.

"There is something in this man which holds my attention as steel filings are held by a magnet. I become aware of a silent, resistless change, which is taking place within my mind. I perceive with sudden clarity that intellect creates its own problems and then makes itself miserable trying to solve them. I surrender myself to the steadily

deepening sense of restfulness. The passage of time now provokes no irritation, as the chains of mind-made problems are being broken and thrown away. I enjoy an ineffable tranquility merely by sitting for a while in the neighborhood of the Maharshi. An untellable peace falls upon me and I know that there is nothing further that I shall now ask from life.

"Day after day brings fresh indications of the greatness of this man. His silence and reserve are habitual. One can easily count the number of words he uses in a single day. It dawns upon me with increasing force that, in this quiet and obscure corner of South India, I have been led to one of the last of India's spiritual superman. I like him greatly because he is so simple and modest, when an atmosphere of authentic greatness lies so palpably around him.

"Each phrase that fell from the Maharshi's lips seemed to contain some precious fragment of essential truth. The words of the Maharshi flame out in my memory like beacon lights. "I pluck golden fruits from rare meetings with wise men", wrote trans-Atlantic Emerson in his diary, and it is certain that I plucked the whole basketfuls during my talks with this man. Our best philosophers of Europe could not hold a candle to him."

This very well produced book makes one discover that spirituality is not something vague and uncertain but substantial and proven as got manifested in the Maharshi. The book could be considered an essential reading for every seeker of Truth. Ⓢ

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"Of the alphabet, I am Alpha" — Gita X:33

ALPHAPLUS α+

A bulletin of the Alpha Foundation August, 2007

Activities in June, 2007

Icfai Republic Schools

- *Fatehnagar, Hyderabad* : Present strength is 1150 up to Class X.
- *Donthanapally, Hyderabad*: A bridge school at IBS site has 103 students.
- *Balanagar, Hyderabad*: Started during current academic year, has student strength of 588.
- *Kolkata*: Located at Santoshpur and started during current academic year, has 350 students.
- *Bangalore*: also started during current academic year, has a strength of 60 students.
- *IRS Knights, Fatehnagar, Hyderabad*: The night school now has 20 students.
- *IRS Junior College, Fatehnagar, Hyderabad*: A maiden effort at college education, has 22 students so far and 10 more are likely to join.

Alpha Centre for Learning (ACL)

Karmiknagar, Heeranagar, Rajiv Gandhi nagar and MS Makhta are the new slums where we have started ACLs.

The ACL at Guruvaiah Colony, Tenali is the first such attempt outside Hyderabad.

Public-Private Partnerships

MoU has been signed with AP Government to co-manage three Government schools where we are providing support in areas of (1) civil/electrical repairs (2) teachers salaries (3) free mid-day meal (4) school administration support (5) building additional class-rooms and (6) text/note books. The total number of students benefitted is 2280.

Private-Private Partnerships

Under this initiative the Foundation has entered into MoUs with 11 private schools and is providing support by way of (1) free mid-day meal (2) teachers salaries (3) note/text books and (4) provision of additional infrastructural facilities. The total number of students benefitted is 4590.

Health Camps

Eye camp held at Karmiknagar was visited by more than 300 patients. This camp was supported by Dr. Ranga Reddy Lions Eye Institute (Drishti Foundation). 100 spectacles were distributed free of cost.

A cancer screening camp was conducted in association with Indo-American Cancer Institute and Research Centre. More than 450 patients availed the facility.

An exclusive eye camp was conducted for the students of Nish Shulk Prabhat Hindi Telugu High School where about 300 students were screened for various eye problems. It was noticed that out of 35 students found with vision defect needing spectacles 32 were from Class 8 to Class 10. Drishti Foundation deputed a team of four technicians to this camp.

Legal-aid Camps

The Member-Secretary of AP State Legal Services Authority visited the Foundation office and discussed the modalities of Legal Aid Clinics planned to be started by us in various slums where we already have ACLs.

Reaching out to Community

Under a new initiative, Alpha Health Workers visited slums and sent about 30 patients suffering from different ailments to various charity hospitals

identified for this purpose. Patients sent under the Foundation banner as per the understanding with the hospitals will receive 50% discount on consultation and medicines

Four more missing children housed in the State Juvenile Home have been restored to their parents.

Nav Chetna Shibirs were conducted at two ACLs – Rasoolpura and Bapunagar.

The Foundation is extending a helping hand to individuals like Srinivas (polio affected MBA student), Mani Kumari (for treatment of neurological disorders), Vinyasri (a student of IRS pursuing Intermediate) and Kalpana (for pursuing BBA-MBA Program at Icfai National College).

Srinivas

Mani Kumari

DESIRE society at IDA, Bollaram meant for HIV/AIDS affected children is being supported by the Foundation by way of doctor visits, free medicines, nutrient, uniform, stationery, Montessori study and block building material.

Art & Culture

Icfai-Maharashtra Nite 2007, a concert by Sri Sridhar Phadke was conducted in association with Vivek Vardhini Education Society. It was attended by more than 1500 music lovers of Hyderabad. Sri Sridhar Phadke, son and prodigy of the famous (late) Sri Sudhir Phadke held the audience spell bound, not only by his singing but also by sharing the nuances of classical music.

CP Brown Academy

In memory of (Late) Charles P Brown, a dedicated British Civil servant who rendered yeoman service to Telugu language, the

Alpha Foundation has set up CP Brown Academy to serve the cause of Telugu language. The main objectives are:

- To publish Telugu learning kits for those who can speak Telugu but cannot read the script.
- To transliterate and paraphrase the popular verses such as Vemana Sathakamu, Sumathi Sathakamu in Roman script.
- To institute prizes for best short stories, novels, dramas and thesis.
- To encourage scholars to write Kavyams on contemporary themes and publish them by offering suitable assistance.
- To establish a central library for stocking rare/old and contemporary books of Telugu language make them available for readers/ researchers.
- To institute a prestigious annual award – Telugu Bharathi Puraskaram in recognition of the life time contribution to Telugu language.

Our Vision Abroad

To actualize the vision of Alpha Foundation, it is decided that the representatives of the Foundation will make series of visits to the United States and promote the various initiatives. The purpose of these visits is to meet the Indian Diaspora, NGOs and other like-minded

individuals living in US, and sensitize them and build a network of individuals who empathize with Foundation initiatives, and facilitate a pathway for fund-raising in future.

Dr. TRK Rao and Mr. Koshy Varghese made two trips to US during the months of June and November 2006 respectively and generated valuable contacts. Again in the month of April, 2007, Dr. TRK Rao and Mr. Sridhar Chari made visits to Chicago, Houston, Memphis, Dallas, Atlanta, Washington, Aberdeen, and New York. During this visit the representatives met people in small groups and created awareness about the Alpha initiatives. The representatives made presentations highlighting the school environment, future plans and modes of partnerships. As an outcome of these presentations, NRIs have expressed their interest to spare time and shoulder the responsibility to advocate the Alpha initiatives in large gatherings like cultural festivals, conferences and other meetings. Recently, the Vanguri Foundation in US gave publicity to Alpha initiatives during their cultural festival. Also these visits enabled the representatives to get connected with representatives of World Bank, Global Giving, India Development aid Society and TANA among others.

The Alpha Foundation

A SMALL CONTRIBUTION CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

The Alpha Foundation is a registered Charitable Trust (sponsored by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India). The following charitable activities are undertaken for the upliftment of the underprivileged:

- ☑ Quality education (including mid-day meals) to over 4000 students from poor families in urban slums/rural areas — free of cost.
- ☑ Free medical clinic for the urban poor.
- ☑ Feeding programs at government hostels, hospitals, oldage homes and orphanages.
- ☑ Distribution of clothes/books for the poor.
- ☑ Free medical/eye camps for the poor.
- ☑ Free legal aid for the poor.
- ☑ Flood/drought relief programs.

The Alpha Foundation welcomes your help. All donations (Rs.500 and above) are exempted from Income Tax under Section 80G. Please donate generously, by sending your cheques/DDs to:

The Alpha Foundation

8, Dwarakapuri Colony, Punjagutta, Hyderabad 500 082, India
Website: www.alphacharities.org
Contact: HNM Prasad Cell # 99121-11206

Sri Shiridi Saibaba

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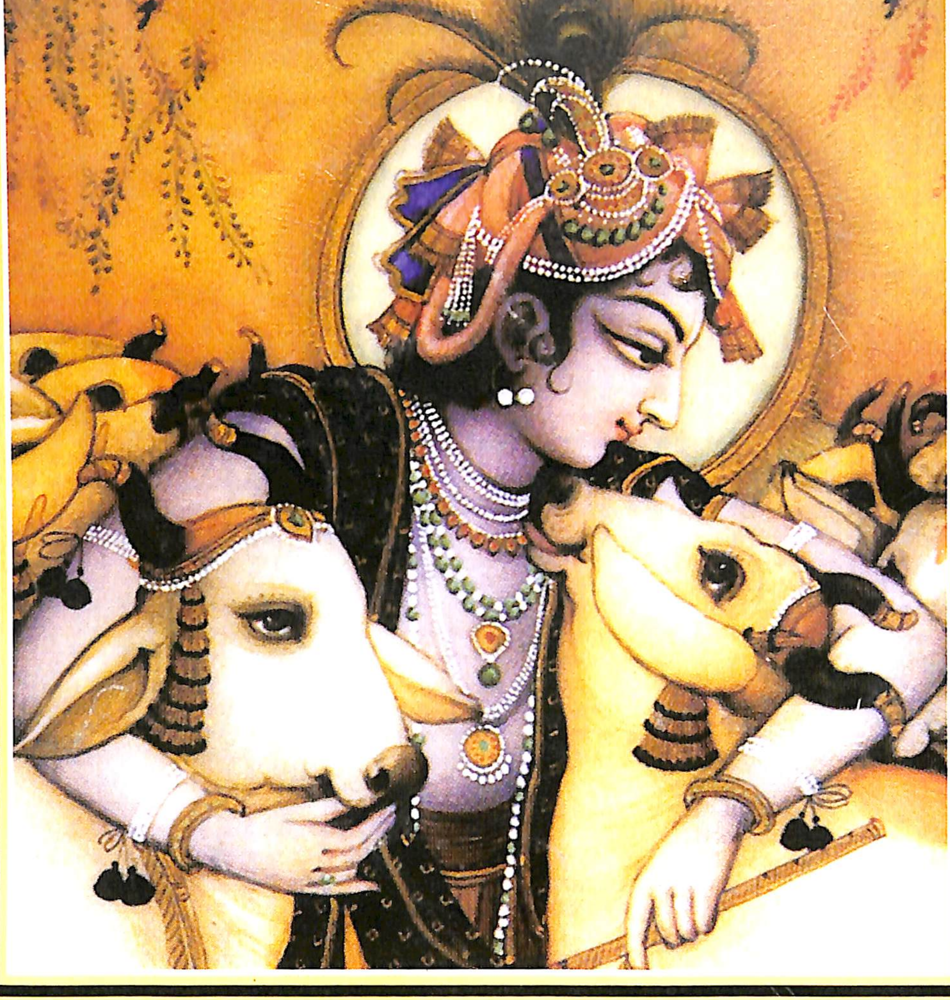

As a man casts off worn-out garments and puts on new ones, so too the *jivatma* casts off worn-out bodies and enters into new ones.

—***Bhagavad Gita* (II-22)**

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